

Reagan Aides Say U.S. Agencies Issued Warning of Beirut Attack

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1—Three days before a bomb blast killed United States marines, soldiers and sailors in Beirut, intelligence agencies warned that American forces in Lebanon would probably be the target of a terrorist attack, Reagan Administration officials said today.

The intelligence report, the officials said, specified that the group that appeared to be planning such an attack was a militant pro-Iranian Shiite-Muslim group in Lebanon known as the Islamic Amal and the Party of God.

The head of the Islamic Amal has denied that his group was responsible for the attack Oct. 23 that destroyed the Marine headquarters at the Beirut airport. After the attack, American and French intelligence officials said the Muslim splinter group appeared to have been involved.

In a related development, a spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Lane Bonner, said a team of explosives experts from the bureau's laboratory had been sent to Beirut to help determine who was responsible for the attack.

Mr. Bonner said debris recovered at the blast site would be brought back to Washington for analysis to determine whether the bomb could be linked to improvised explosive devices used in other attacks in Lebanon.

No Exact Predictions

The intelligence warning did not predict the exact time, type or target of an attack, according to the officials, but nevertheless stood out from the flow of vague rumors and imprecise intelligence about terrorist activities in Lebanon. It was published in a classified intelligence bulletin on Oct. 20, the officials said.

"It was a heads-up, a clear, prominent warning," one official who read the report said. He said similar, though less precise, warnings had appeared in intelligence reports earlier in the year.

The officials said the report appeared in the National Intelligence Digest, a summary of intelligence information that is prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency and distributed every day to about 200 senior Government officials, including Marine Corps officers and United States military commanders in Europe who have spe-

cific command over the Marine units in Lebanon.

The adequacy of Marine security procedures and the quality of intelligence before the bombing have emerged as major issues in the wake of the bombing.

Commandant Didn't See Report

General Kelley, the Marine Commandant, did not see or know of the Oct. 20 intelligence report, a Marine spokesman said today. The spokesman, Col. James L. McManaway, said General Kelley, who returned to Washington on Oct. 19 after an eight-day trip to Europe and the Middle East, worked at his living quarters in Washington on Oct. 20 and did not see the National Intelligence Digest because rules governing the handling of the highly classified document stipulate that it not be taken out of Marine headquarters in Virginia.

Colonel McManaway said he did not know what the Marines did with the specific intelligence report on Oct. 20, but he said that in general "our commanders in Beirut get exactly the same information we see here." He said the Oct. 20 report did not contain the kind of precise information that could have helped the Marines defend against the bombing. "For all we knew," he said, "the threat mentioned might have involved an old lady carrying a shopping bag filled with explosives."

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The number of American deaths from the bombing is uncertain. Gen. Paul X. Kelley said the death toll was 239, and spokesmen for the Defense Department and the Marine Corps said 229. A Marine spokesman in Beirut said it was at least 230, and a report from a military hospital in West Germany indicated the number was 231.

A second terrorist bomb attack the same day blew up the headquarters of French forces in Beirut, killing 56 paratroops. The American and the French troops were based in Beirut as part of a international peacekeeping force.

General Kelley and other top military officers in Washington and in Beirut have said the Marines in Lebanon had no intelligence information warn-

ing that they faced the threat of a suicide bomb attack such as the one that destroyed the Marine headquarters.

Senior Administration officials and members of Congress looking into the circumstances surrounding the attack said today that the intelligence warning published on Oct. 20, while not providing details about a possible attack against the Marines, did include enough information so that the Marines should have increased security.

Specifically, they said, in the wake of the suicide terrorist bombing attack against the United States Embassy in Beirut that was carried out in a similar fashion earlier this year, the warning should have alerted the Marines to take special precautions.

The intelligence report, the officials said, pinpointed the Islamic Amal as the group that intelligence sources in Lebanon said was most likely to attack the Marines. It also described the group as a leading suspect in the bombing of the American Embassy. The leader of the splinter group, Hussein Musavi, denied any involvement in either attack last week.